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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Fifteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 308th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 2 February 1996, at 11 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. CORTI

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AGENDA ITEM 5: IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

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96-80216 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 5: IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Report of Working Group II (CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1 and Add.1 and 2 and CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.12)

1. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) drew attention to paragraphs 4 and 5 of document CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.12. The text of those paragraphs, which would be incorporated in the final report of the Committee, represented the outcome of two decisions taken in Working Group II and submitted to the Committee for consideration; paragraph 4 dealt with general recommendations on articles 7 and 8 of the Convention and paragraph 5 concerned the draft programme for Habitat II.

2. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING asked whether the sections of the report contained in documents CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1 and Add.2 were to be left in the form of a working paper, rather than included in the final report of the Committee. If so, there would be no need to discuss them in detail.

3. Ms. AOUIJ, speaking as Chairperson of Working Group II, said that the Working Group had completed its analysis of article 7 of the Convention, but had not had time to finalize general recommendations on it or to discuss article 8. She therefore felt that the relevant sections of the Working Group's report should not form part of the Committee's official report, but should be distributed informally to all the members, in their working languages, so that they could submit comments and, if necessary, propose changes before the Committee's next session.

4. She felt that paragraph 4 of document CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.12, which was to be incorporated into the final report, should state clearly that the Working Group had based its deliberations on an original text drafted by Ms. Khan and Ms. García-Prince. She hoped that the many useful documents provided by the Secretariat would be marked with an asterisk in the definitive text and listed at the end of the report.

5. Ms. CARTWRIGHT supported the suggestion that the sections of the Working Group's report dealing with article 7 should take the form of an informal working paper. Sections on temporary special measures and general recommendations had yet to be written and the text still needed careful editing, which she would try to carry out in the next few weeks. Furthermore, the general recommendation on article 7 would need to be tied in closely with article 8, although that would be dealt with in a separate document.

6. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE said that article 7 was of the utmost importance for bringing about a real change in the status of women in society and government. The Committee must therefore ensure that any discussion of technical problems did not deprive the final text of its political force.

7. The CHAIRPERSON said that since the Committee included political experts as well as technical experts, the political aspects of article 7 would not be overlooked.

8. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that it would be necessary to amend paragraph 4 of document CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.12 by removing the reference to article 8 and adding a final sentence stating that the Committee would also take up a general recommendation on article 8.

9. The CHAIRPERSON, referring to document CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1/Add.1, said that when Working Group II had realized that it would not have time to take up the issue of the Habitat II Conference, she had undertaken, with the help of Ms. Khan, to draft the document in question. The draft Statement of Principles and Commitments and Global Plan of Action: The Habitat Agenda contained no reference to women's right to housing, which was linked to many other aspects of the question of poverty; moreover, women were among the first victims of the housing problems affecting so many people throughout the world. Other human rights treaty bodies had prepared documents making their concerns known to the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, which would be meeting the following week; she felt that CEDAW should do likewise. The Preparatory Committee would, of course, be free to accept or ignore the suggestions made in document CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1/Add.1. She asked whether the Committee wished to retain the document in its current form or to submit it as a formal suggestion to the Preparatory Committee. In any case, the document should be reflected in the Committee's final report to show that the Committee had addressed the issue at its current session.

10. Ms. AOUIJ said that the Committee welcomed the Chairperson's initiative in drafting document CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1/Add.1. Ideally, the Chairperson would be able to deliver a speech in person at the Habitat II Conference but, in any case, the document should be forwarded to the Preparatory Committee. If the document must take the form of an official suggestion in order to be included in the official documents of the Habitat II Conference, she was certain that the Committee would not hesitate to approve it as such.

11. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that it was difficult for any treaty body to bring about changes in a conference agenda. She suggested that the Chairperson should convey the document to the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II, although that would not guarantee its inclusion in the Conference agenda, and that members of the Committee should also bring the document to the attention of their national delegations. Neither of those actions would preclude the Chairperson from including the points made in the document in her own speech at the Conference, but she felt that it was important to initiate as soon as possible the process of requesting inclusion of the issue of women's housing in the Habitat II agenda.

12. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS supported the suggestions made by the representative of the Secretary-General. She asked whether it would be possible to obtain a copy of the Habitat Agenda, so that the Committee could suggest practical ways of including the issue of women's housing in the official Conference documents. Time was of the essence, since the Preparatory Committee's session was about to begin.

13. Ms. KHAN said that paragraph 10 of document CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1/Add.1 should be amended. A new subparagraph (a) should be inserted, reading: "The right of women to own, inherit, control and sustain tenure of land on an equal footing with men", and existing subparagraphs (a) to (g) should become (b) to (h).

14. The CHAIRPERSON said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the report of Working Group II as contained in documents CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1 and Add.1 and 2.

15. It was so decided.

16. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that in preparing document CEDAW/C/1996/WG.II/WP.1/Add.1, the Working Group had used only an English text. The document in its current form did not include amendments discussed the previous day, but those would be included in the final version.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Fifteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 309th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 2 February 1996, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. CORTI

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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AT ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AT ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION (CEDAW/C/1996/L.1 and Add.1 and 2, Add.3/Rev.1, Add.4/Rev.1, Add.5/Rev.1, Add.6/Rev.1 and Add.7 to 12)

1. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING, Rapporteur, introduced the Committee's report.

CEDAW/C/1996/L.1

2. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that there were 151 States parties to the Convention, not 150 as stated in paragraph 1.

3. Ms. BARE, referring to paragraphs 22 and 23, said that she had served in Working Group I, not Working Group II, and that Ms. Bustelo Garcia del Real had not been a member of Working Group II.

4. Document CEDAW/C/1996/L.1, as orally amended, was adopted.

CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.1

5. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING, Rapporteur, read out the text of a new paragraph which was to be inserted between paragraphs 6 and 7. The paragraph drew attention to the support expressed by the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies for the proposal to relocate the Committee to Geneva.

6. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that the second sentence of paragraph 9 should be replaced by the following text: "In the course of 1995 there had been 12 new ratifications of or accessions to the Convention".

7. Document CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.1, as orally amended, was adopted.

CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.2

8. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING, Rapporteur, read out a series of editorial changes intended to bring the document into line with the text of the Beijing Platform for Action.

9. Document CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.2, as orally amended, was adopted.

CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.3/Rev.1, Add.4/Rev.1, Add.5/Rev.1, Add.6/Rev.1 and Add.7 to 11

10. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING, Rapporteur, recalled that, in accordance with the new procedure, those documents had already been approved.

CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.12

11. Document CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.12 was adopted.

12. The report of the Committee as a whole was adopted.

13. Ms. CARTWRIGHT recalled that she had drawn the Committee's attention to a number of errors in the compilation of its general recommendations and that the representative of the Secretary-General had assured her that the document in question would be revised.

14. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING, Rapporteur, pointed out that she had asked the Secretariat to send her the final text of the Committee's report before it was printed, since the revised texts of the concluding comments on some reports was not yet available. She had also asked the Secretariat to review the document detailing the commitments made by member States at the Fourth World Conference on Women, since the information concerning her own country, Germany, was incorrect.

15. She would like, based upon her own experience as Rapporteur during the previous two sessions, to make a number of suggestions for improving the Rapporteur's work. She planned to submit a document summarizing those experiences.

16. At an early stage in its next session, the Committee should agree on guidelines for drafting its concluding comments, paying particular attention to such elements as format, headings, summaries and recommendations. The subject-matter should follow the order of the articles of the Convention and, in making its recommendations and suggestions, the Committee should decide whether to include references to specific articles.

17. Ms. ABAKA, speaking on a point of order, said that although the Rapporteur's observations would undoubtedly be of great value for the Committee's future work, it would be better to wait until the Committee had before it the document which Ms. Schöpp-Schilling had undertaken to prepare.

18. Ms. ESTRADA CASTILLO noted that the amended final recommendations in respect of certain countries, including Cuba and Paraguay, were being adopted even though the documents in question were not available.

19. The CHAIRPERSON said that the translations of the documents were not all completed. Nevertheless, the report would faithfully reflect all the agreed additions to the final recommendations. With regard to the proposal made at the Chairpersons' meeting on the follow up to the International Conference on Population and Development and on cooperation between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other treaty bodies, it had been decided that the Executive Director of UNFPA should issue a formal invitation to the Committee. The Chairperson was already in receipt of the letter in which the Committee was invited to cooperate with UNFPA in bringing together representatives of various treaty bodies for a round-table discussion on implementation and monitoring of the reproductive and sexual health and development aspects of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the

Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. She intended to respond positively to the invitation on the Committee's behalf.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

20. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRPERSON declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.